October 1947 c.1

Who Said 'I Can't'? It Wasn't Ronnie

HV1765
copy one

Photo: Los Angeles *Examiner*

RONNIE SANDERS gets the Eagle award—from his mother's hands.

LIKE EVERY Boy Scout, Ronnie Sanders hoped to be an "Eagle" someday. He set his eyes on that goal the day he joined Troop 48 in his home town of Culver City, California, four years ago. But—what irony!—those eyes of his were failing. Ronnie was going blind.

By the end of his first year in Scouting, Ronnie had won a First Class rating—and he had lost his sight. Would he ever make Eagle Scout? The lad, now 17, got his answer some months ago when the ribboned eagle of Scouting's highest rank was pinned on his tunic at a big Scout Court of Honor. Ronnie was hailed as the only blind Eagle Scout in America.

"Don't get the idea that Ronnie's tests were made any easier because of his handicap," says Scoutmaster R. C. Cochrane, who is a member of the Culver City Rotary Club. "He had to do all the things every aspiring Eagle Scout must do, and the truth is in many cases he did them even better."

Among the skills which he had to demonstrate were lifesaving, cooking, pathfinding, basketry, and bird study. The last test was a tough one, for it meant long hours of study from notes transcribed in Braille, listening to recorded bird calls, and handling stuffed specimens. He identified 80 birds from memory—getting some of them before the examiner could check the tags. Ronnie is an expert woodsman, too! He won third in a woodcutting contest with 799 other Scouts.

Marsh Wilson, another Culver City Rotarian, presided at the Court of Honor, as advancement chairman of the local Scout Council.